

**Edwards: \$920,000 for New Brazos County Army Reserve Center Included Under 2009 Defense Authorization Bill**

(Washington, DC)— U.S. Representative Chet Edwards (TX17) today supported House passage of H.R. 5658, the fiscal year 2009 Defense Authorization bill, which, at Edwards' request, authorizes \$920,000 to plan and design a new Army Reserve Center (ARC) in Brazos County for the 420th Engineering Brigade.

"Members of the 420th Engineering Brigade need facilities that effectively train and equip them to carry out their national security responsibilities," said Edwards. "This funding is an important first step that will pave the way for a new Army Reserve Center for the 420th Engineering Brigade."

The current Moore Memorial ARC in Bryan, built in 1958, is falling into disrepair, with foundation problems causing wall separation and cracked floors. It is also too close to the street for current force protection requirements. For the safety of the soldiers who use the Reserve Center, a new facility has been identified by local leaders as a high priority. The total project cost for construction is projected to be \$12.8 million.

Once the \$601.4 billion Defense Authorization bill is signed into law in the coming weeks, Edwards will then include the \$920,000 for the design of the new center in the 2009 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations bill. Edwards is the Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and intends to secure the remaining \$12 million in construction funds once planning and design work is completed.

Other major provisions authorized under the 2009 Defense Authorization bill include:

? Military Pay Raise — Provides an average 3.9% pay increase for military personnel in FY 2009

? Includes \$70 billion in emergency funds earmarked for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan

? Prohibits increases in health care fees in TRICARE and the TRICARE pharmacy program

? Increases the size of the military by 7,000 Army troops and 5,000 Marines 1,023 Navy sailors and 450 Air Force personnel.

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